

MAY 29 1944

TENTATIVE SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESBYTERIAN-METHODIST CO OPERATION IN KETCHIKAN, ALASKA.

By W. A. Matson, Pastor of the Ketchikan Methodist Church.

HISTORY.

1. Traditional understanding is that the Methodist Church was white and Presbyterian native. Methodist church was established in 1900 and was bi-racial until Presbyterian work established as a branch of Saxman. Our records show that we withdrew from native work, but give neither the date nor reason. There is no local knowledge of any written comity agreement, but it has been a practical understanding for many years, and two Presbyterian pastors, Christiansen and Falconer, are quoted as recognizing it, while Beck denies there was any agreement. The sons of both Falconer and Beck grew up in the Methodist church in Ketchikan and are now members there.

2. The present Presbyterian pastor, James Hall, arrived in fall of 1941, and found work carried on as a native church by retired pastor Beck. He attempted to carry on a native program for a year, but had very poor success. Presbyterian work at Saxman was practically dropped in 1939, following the burning of the church there.

3. Hall was informed that there was no comity agreement and began to develop bi-racial program in the fall of 1942. He met with considerable success among a group of new young people, mostly teachers, who made considerable effort to support him and to develop a white congregation. No attempt was made to get families with children of school age or to get white children into the Sunday School. The new group created a friendly and attractive atmosphere.

4. As the whites began to attend so did the natives in increasing numbers. The result was that the native program began to flourish. The explanation seems to be partly the greater attraction of increasing numbers, and partly the feeling that services which could attract a fine group of young whites must be much worth while. Another factor was the coming of two undenominational volunteer missionaries, one of whom has given full time service and the other part time to the Presbyterian program.

5. Tension has developed between the Methodist and Presbyterian pastors, the Presbyterian feeling that the Methodist was unfair and dishonest in claiming that they were violating a comity agreement, while the Methodists felt that an agreement was being violated as the competition for Sunday School teachers and choir members grew, and that Presbyterian success was a criticism of their work. It was heightened by a report of the Alaska Committee in New York that the Presbyterian church was native and was not seeking whites. Hall was not informed of this by his Board, and consequently continued his previous policies.

PROPOSED COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

1. A comity agreement that the Methodist Church is white and the Presbyterian native is to be mutually recognized and publicized. The two churches shall attempt to present a united front and program to the community, without competition.

2. The pastors are to consult frequently, and a joint committee from both congregations shall meet at least quarterly to consider matters of common or conflicting interest.

3. There should be an <sup>inter</sup> exchange of pastors and choirs several times a year.

4. It is recognized that some whites, and possibly some natives, will continue to worship across race lines. This should not be discouraged by either pastor.

5. Whites shall be encouraged by both pastors to help where they are really needed to help in the native church program--Sunday School, choir, social service, etc.--but not to join except as they desire to join a native church.

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Suggestions for Ketchikan cooperation---2

6. The present white members shall be encouraged to continue their membership in the native Presbyterian church, but they may transfer to the Methodist without prejudice. It is recognized that most of them are temporary residents.

7. Care should be taken to use the whites in the native church so as to neither discourage nor displace native leadership.--nor to build a competitive program.

8. The Methodists are not to encourage native membership or attendance except where they have "gone white", or live near the North End Chapel, and would not attend a native church.

9. The Methodist membership is to be encouraged to support both financially and morally the Presbyterian social and recreational program at the old native brotherhood hall.

10. The Methodists, for the year 1944-45 at least, are to maintain a parish worker in Ketchikan. Under this program the Methodist and Presbyterian Boards will be putting comparable amounts into Ketchikan.

11. This program is to begin whenever a successor to the present Presbyterian pastor is appointed.

Note--This is not intended as a group of regulations, but of suggestions by which all present values may be conserved. The important thing is the mutual understanding as to what the comity agreement is and a mutual purpose to present a common front before the community.

Ketchikan, May 16, 1944.

as suggested by  
W. A. Matson.



## CHURCH COOPERATION IN KETCHIKAN, ALASKA

Basic Philosophy: We seek to win all the people of Alaska to God through a saving knowledge of Christ. All are children of God and the sacrifice of Christ is sufficient to save all who will come. Before God the souls of all men appear upon a common level. No difference should be made between two persons because of race or nationality and no deed should be done in connection with any Christian Church assuming even an inference of superiority or inferiority on the part of any individual or group.

Every individual who enters the fellowship of a local Church should be encouraged to give expression to his full powers of faith, life, and service for Christ in and through his own Church.

Every Christian Church ought to build a strong program among its own people and cooperate with every other Christian Church in an effort to win all people to Christ and to establish Christian principles and practices in the life of the community.

In the interest of Christian cooperation and spiritual strength in Ketchikan, Alaska the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches agree upon the following program:

1. Church Program: Both Churches belong to their respective denominations and are free to develop strong individual Church programs faithful to their denominational relationships but should carefully avoid anything that would interfere with Christian unity in the community.
2. The Methodist Church will emphasize a Christian ministry to white people but membership is also open to native people and they are welcome.
3. The Presbyterian Church will emphasize a Christian ministry to native people but membership is also open to white people and they are welcome.
4. Each Church shall seek to build a strong program based upon leadership from its own group or those who will become a part of its own group. This is in accordance with the basic principle of developing Christian leadership among those who enter a Christian fellowship for growth in Christ.
5. The two Churches shall appoint a committee from the governing body of each to meet together semi-annually or more frequently if needed with their respective pastors:
  - a. <sup>to</sup> plan for cooperative services or exchange of services at stated times during the year, and united movements, such as Daily Vacation Bible Schools, which would be helpful to the entire community.
  - b. to consider moral and spiritual problems in the community and what the Churches together should do about them.
  - c. to seek ways and means of full cooperation toward a strong Christian atmosphere in the community.



- d. to consider in a Christian manner any problems of misunderstanding which might cause division or weaken the Christian influence of either or both Churches.
6. Neither Church shall solicit members from the other but both shall seek to win people to Christ in accordance with its respective emphasis.
7. If a member of one Church voluntarily seeks membership in the other the officers of the Church in which he or she seeks membership shall first require him or her to confer with the Pastor of the other Church. If the conditions seem to indicate the wisdom of the transfer then it shall be approved and he shall be received by the Church in which he seeks membership. If the conditions make the transfer seem unwise then both Pastors shall attempt to dissuade him. However, if, after proper consultation he insists upon the transfer he shall be dismissed by one and received by the other Church according to the standards of each Church without prejudice and the circumstances recorded.

JEJ:FK

August 1944

Unit of Work in Alaska

Board of National Missions

Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.



PROPOSED COOPERATIVE PROGRAM  
as suggested by  
W. A. Watson, Pastor of the  
Ketchikan Methodist Church

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2. The pastors are to consult frequently, and a joint committee from both congregations shall meet at least quarterly to consider matters of common or conflicting interest.
3. There should be an interchange of pastors and choirs several times a year.
4. It is recognized that some whites, and possibly some natives, will continue to worship across race lines. This should not be discouraged by either pastor.
5. Whites shall be encouraged by both pastors to help where they are really needed to help in the native church program--Sunday School, choir, social service, etc.--but not to join except as they desire to join a native church.
6. The present white members shall be encouraged to continue their membership in the native Presbyterian Church, but they may transfer to the Methodist without prejudice. It is recognized that most of them are temporary residents.
7. Care should be taken to use the whites in the native church so as to neither discourage nor displace native leadership--nor to build a competitive program.
8. The Methodists are not to encourage native membership or attendance except where they have "gone white", or live near the North End Chapel, and would not attend a native church.
9. The Methodist membership is to be encouraged to support both financially and morally the Presbyterian social and recreational program at the old native brotherhood hall.
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